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SECURITY INFORMATION

General Walter Bedell Smith
DCI's MESSAGE - 8 January 1952

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During the past year we have been so involved with the problems of reorganization that this is the only chance I have had to talk to the people in the Agency. I should be getting around to meeting you all individually, and I have not been able to do that. It is not entirely my fault. It is something that is correctable in the future when we get settled down.

I have just completed redrafting the report to the National Security Council about the reorganization that we have been through during the time I have been here. As you know, that was directed by the Council and the report of the committee headed by Mr. Dulles, and like all reorganizations, it has been an annoying and a painful process, and particularly it has been annoying and painful to the people that are being reorganized, shoved around, transferred, the designation of their offices changed. It is unsettling; well, it could not be helped. Most of it is over, and I think the benefits will be good.

I want to talk to you about it and about some of the weaknesses that I have found and which still exist and some which I hope will be corrected. In the first place, relative to the offices, when I came here, the first thing that impressed me was the complete compartmentalization within the Agency, and I got worried about it because you cannot have an integrated, effective, functioning, career organization which is so completely compartmentalized that the various offices are designated without reference to the whole of which they are components. It is not necessary that everybody know everything about what is

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going on within the entire Agency, of course. In fact, it would be dangerous. I do not myself want to know some of the things that are going on, but it would be fatal if all of our people did not have an overall conception of the function and the responsibility of the institution as a whole. And so much of it was hush-hush that it got to be ridiculous. You read articles about the silliness of some of our security classifications. I question those a little bit, but the fact remains that we overdo it.

I always think of an example when I was Chief of Staff in North Africa during that campaign. Because I and some of my contemporaries had gone to school with a number of German officers, all of whom were occupying responsible positions, our particular assignments were classified. General Von Schell (?), who commanded in Sicily, was a classmate of mine, and we had solved many problems and maneuvers together. And we knew, each knew, how the other thought and how he would be likely to react in a similar situation; so it was desirable that those officers who participated in the planning of operations not be too generally known to the opposite members on the other side. Consequently, my assignment was classified. In due time, I got a decoration of some sort, and when you get a decoration, there is usually a general who says all the nice things he can think of to say before he starts giving you hell the day after you get the decoration. It began with the usual: "Walter B. Smith, Major General, blank, blank, blank" (the assignment being censored out) and then proceeded with the citation, and then wound up with saying, "By command of General Eisenhower, Walter B. Smith, Major General, Chief of Staff." The personnel division had written the citation, and the adjutant general had published it, and

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there was not the necessary coordination between the two. Well, it was ridiculous, of course, but it points up a weakness which can come from too great compartmentalization. I will not touch on that any further. You will get it as you go along.

As you study our organization, you will realize, if you do not already realize it, that it is unique in the field of intelligence. No other nation has a centralized thing like this. This centralization has its good points and it has its bad points. You will realize, if you do not realize it already, that in performing our major function, which is the preparation of estimates of what our opponents are likely to do, what they may be expected to do, or what their capabilities are, we are largely an assembly plant. We do produce raw information by our own means; but we do not duplicate, or to any great extent parallel, the intelligence producing functions of the major departments of the Government, and on them we depend to furnish us the information on which our estimates are based and to cooperate with us in preparing those estimates. This is so that the final version represents a consensus of opinion. In the first place, consensus of opinion are always compromises, and compromises are always relatively weak. In the second place, an intelligence assembly plant is no stronger than the individual links which produce the basic information on which these estimates are made. So if any of the major agencies which participate in, and on which we depend for the production of information and the finalization of intelligence estimates, are weak, the product is weak, the chain being no stronger than any one of its links. That is the weakness because while the Director of Central Intelligence is responsible for coordination, he has no authority. It

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has to be done by good will, persuasion, and convincing. Very fortunately, in the intelligence field in government, and I say this advisedly, the cooperation and the good will exist. Indeed, if there were the same measure of cooperation and mutual independence in every other field of activity among the Departments of State, Defense, and those others that are represented on the Intelligence Advisory Committee, we would have no major difficulties. That is not "we"—I mean the United States. In the intelligence field we do not have major difficulties. It is difficult to get that good will. It is due to a combination of fortuitous circumstances which I do not know to be existing anywhere else. It is up to us to keep it or to do our part in keeping it.

Another thing is the general unsatisfactory milieu, the dissatisfactory working conditions that exist within this Agency itself, and the limitations that are placed by funds, allocation of personnel on our sister intelligence services in the Army, Navy, Air Force, and the Department of State. With regard to our own problems, we are scattered out over almost 30 buildings in Washington, and, of course, that makes us more vulnerable than we would be otherwise. A lot of our people are working in rabbit wards down here in the temporary buildings which are extremely unsatisfactory—bad in the summertime, bad in the winter, dingy, not conducive to good moral. You accept things a lot worse than that when you are in the field, but here we expect a little in the way of pleasant surroundings. We will get a building of our own which will be adequate. We would have had the money last year. We got the authorization and the Senate passed the appropriation. It is our own fault. We did not get behind it hard enough, and we did not get it started early enough; so in the

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last two days of the session in the House, the Air Force appropriation in which it was concealed was dropped in block, and we did not have the chance to rescue it. We will this year, I trust, but that means that we will still have these unsatisfactory working conditions for another year and a half.

Now, I say it makes us more insecure, and you will hear security harped on until you are black in the face. But believe me, it is not overdone. Washington, as an entity, leaks like a sieve. When I was in Moscow, one of my first private conversations was with the Turkish Ambassador, who is now at the United Nations—a very wise, very able, and very astute diplomat, and he said the same thing about the diplomatic colony in Moscow. "In fact," he said, "recently at a large party as a test, when I was in the door, I made up the most fantastic rumor I could think of and told it to the first person I met; and within 20 minutes, it had gone the complete circuit of the room. It had been told in perfect confidence, had been properly embroidered upon by every recipient, and had come back to me in its inflated form." Well, as I said before, and I want to repeat it, Washington leaks like a sieve. And that is why, although our classification of documents may seem ridiculous to some, it is simply evidence of an effort to retain a little security.

Now, there is one thing about this Agency that must and will be maintained and that is our internal security. If everybody else in government talks his damned head off, I propose and intend that I myself and you shall lose no opportunity to remain silent. Please remember a shut mouth is one of the most valuable contributions that you can bring to your career in intelligence. A little brains is desirable too. The less you say, the more chance there is that any

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deficiency in the second respect will remain undetected. And let the rest of them talk if they must. We deplore that; but, for God's sake, you shut up. You can talk about the job and about the business in the security of your own office, and remember what information and intelligence means to the people who try to penetrate us with every effort at their command, and that represents our friends as well as our enemies. And as you know, many of you, we return the compliment. Information consists of a picture constructed of a minute, of a million minute parts, just like a jigsaw puzzle, and an idle comment may be picked up. And, of course, Washington cocktail parties are the curse of the United States. I do not need to emphasize that. It is there that everybody gets a delusion of grandeur which inspires him or her to impress his audience with how much he knows. And I caution, let them admire your profile. It is really very, very, very serious. I wish I could give you chapter and verse of how serious it is. Many of you will learn, if you have not already in the course of your own experience, the importance of what I have said.

We do not have difficulty getting money, or have not so far. As a matter of fact, that is one of the things that worries me. We have gotten to be too big for an effective intelligence agency. One of the reasons for that is that we do all of the jobs that nobody else can or will do or is willing to admit that they do. That is probably as it should be, and many of you are engaged in the kind of work to which I have reference. Do not be disturbed or concerned if the scope of those operations are, to a certain extent, reduced. In the overt field, we have a great many extremely able, competent, and intelligent

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men and women who have taken on that work because of an intense interest and an intense desire to see something accomplished in an area where little has been done and much needs to be done. And if they are held back, they feel frustrated, but we are going to have to put up with the frustration a little bit for this reason: we can only get just so big until we begin to expose ourselves. As long as we bid quietly in the hundred million or below the half billion category, we do not have to have formal hearings in Congress; I do not have to go before a committee and sell our wares and convince them that the money should be spent. I can tell you in the privacy of this room that such little hearings as we have are held in great privacy with two or possibly three of the ranking members of a committee present; and it never goes beyond that point. When you get into the big money, then you have got to sell it. So there is a limit and you get to a point beyond which the law of diminishing returns begins to exert itself, and we lose more than we gain. So in our overt fields, we are going to have to concentrate on the important processes, devote all of our time and our effort and our talent and our money to further improve, and the money is not the only consideration either. Our talent is limited. We can go to a point, and beyond that we cannot get people with the knowledge, and the ability, and the character, and the integrity that we have set as our standard and which you, ladies and gentlemen, so far meet to my complete satisfaction.

I thank you very much.

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